

Suggested Remarks
Francis A. Donovan
Deputy Mission Director, USAID Manila
League of Governors, Special Session
Discovery Suites
August 31, 2006 (1:00-5:00PM)

Honorable Secretary of Agriculture, Domingo
F. Panganiban
Honorable Secretary of Health, Francisco
Duque
Honorable Governors
Friends and partners from the DOH and DA,
Distinguished friends and colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Magandang Hapon! (Good afternoon)

It is an honor to be here to participate in
today's forum to discuss such an important
topic - Avian Influenza and Pandemic
Preparedness - to revisit the issues, and
to work closely with the Philippine
government in taking the proper next steps
towards protecting the provinces,
municipalities, barangays, and most

importantly, the families of the Philippines.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Departments of State, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Agriculture (USDA), along with other departments and agencies across the federal government, are coordinating international response measures on behalf of the American people. The United States also collaborates closely with 88 foreign governments and international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health on global preparedness.

The Philippines remains fortunate to uphold the "bird-flu free status". However, the country can not be complacent at this

pivotal moment and should always be prepared. In the past five months, USAID Philippines has worked in conjunction with the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture/Bureau of Animal Industry in four key areas of Avian Influenza

Preparedness Planning:

1. Mass communication and education campaigns in 97 LGUs
2. Pandemic Preparedness Planning workshops with the critical LGUs
3. Piloting of Early Warning Systems at the community level in select areas, and
4. Leveraging Public-Private resources at the national level

Within these areas, USAID has placed emphasis on providing technical assistance to the 20 critical areas as defined by the

GRP that take into consideration migratory bird fly-way zones. Given that, USAID/Philippines, together with other donors, has also placed an increasing focus on the provinces in Mindanao and the ARMM, taking into consideration the proximity to Indonesia and Malaysia which are both H5N1 endemic countries that are home to flourishing trade routes with sometimes unregulated trade.

Now that the LGUs have had the opportunity to formulate their preparedness plans, taking into consideration their unique situations, we welcome the opportunity to champion these efforts and provide the appropriate support to put these plans into practice.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the DA/BAI and the DOH for organizing this forum

to recognize the threat of Avian Influenza at the national and local level and ensure the country remains "bird-flu free" and well prepared. We are honored and proud to have assisted the GRP in realizing these achievements.

Maraming salamat po (Thank you)